

2021 SAMHSA SOAR FEBRUARY E-NEWS

Celebrating Black History Month: Spotlight on Former Acting Commissioner of Social Security Carolyn W. Colvin



"My prior work experience—especially the experience I have gained in social service agencies—has taught me about our obligation, as a Nation, to the well-being of our constituents. It has taught me that government can take measured, responsible steps to assist those less fortunate than ourselves, while also promoting the kind of earned right social insurance programs that America's workers deserve in retirement."
Former Acting Commissioner of Social Security, [Carolyn W. Colvin, M.B.A.](#)

February is Black History Month, a time for us to honor Black Americans' achievements in the face of systemic oppression throughout our Nation's history. This year, we are celebrating the Former Acting Commissioner of Social Security (ACOSS), [Carolyn W. Colvin, M.B.A.](#), her achievements while in office, and her support of the SAMHSA SOAR model.

ACOSS Colvin served as Acting Commissioner from February 2013 to January 2017. Her career is one of public service and leadership—in addition to her work at the Social Security Administration (SSA), she served in the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, the Baltimore City Health Department, and the Maryland Department of Human Resources. During her tenure as ACOSS, Ms. Colvin led SSA to administer over \$800 billion each year in monthly benefits to over 60 million recipients. Her leadership at SSA was marked with accuracy, compassion, and excellent customer service.

While ACOSS, Ms. Colvin was an ardent supporter of the SOAR model and its potential for increasing positive outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. During her tenure, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center and SOAR providers across the country had many opportunities to meet with ACOSS Colvin to collaborate and promote the SOAR model. Here are just a few examples of her collaboration with SOAR during this time:

- In 2014, SOAR Specialist Keyana Lewis of One Roof (Birmingham, Alabama) attended an invitation-only meeting with ACOSS Colvin. "I was able to voice opinions about my experience with the local office, how much I have been helped by important contacts at the Disability Determination Office...It was great to meet [Acting] Commissioner

Colvin and to be thanked for the work that I do for the homeless community through SOAR!"

- In 2016, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center served on a panel with ACOSS Colvin to discuss lessons learned from Virginia's work on ending homelessness. During the panel discussion, ACOSS Colvin highlighted the importance of SOAR and relationships between community providers and SSA offices. She noted how SOAR increased positive outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- In 2017, ACOSS Colvin attended the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless meeting, which highlighted the impact of the SOAR model in the State of Colorado.

We are grateful for ACOSS Colvin's leadership and support of SOAR! She is a true SOAR Superstar!

Expand Your SOAR Toolbox With Two New Articles

Expanding your SAMHSA SOAR Toolbox with new resources from the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is a great way to ensure that your SOAR-assisted disability benefit applications and SOAR initiative are robust. Read these two articles today and get ready to SOAR!

[Assisting SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries With Form SSA-455: Disability Update Report](#)

Are you assisting a SOAR applicant with a Continuing Disability Review or redetermination? If so, check out this new article, which gives guidance on completing the SSA-455: Disability Update Report. Form SSA-455: Disability Update Report collects information about Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries' medical conditions, recent treatment for those conditions, recent education or training, and recent attempts to return to work. SOAR specialists can assist beneficiaries by educating them about this form's purpose and the importance of completing it thoroughly and returning it promptly. Additional guidance is provided in the article!

[Using ESG-CV Funds for Dedicated SOAR Caseworkers](#)

The CARES Act included additional Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funding for communities. There is an opportunity for ESG recipients and Continuums of Care to use some of this funding to support dedicated SOAR caseworkers. This article highlights how ESG funds can be used to support SOAR initiatives, reviews ESG awardees, and highlights ways communities across the country are using this funding. Read the article to learn more!

SOAR Jobs

Texas

Integral Care is seeking a full-time SOAR Supervisor based in Austin, Texas. The successful candidate will be responsible for the oversight of the SOAR program within Integral Care.

Learn more about this job on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!

Sharing Our Successes

Tennessee Hospital SOARs to Success with Full-Time SOAR Coordinator

Whitney Malone from Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, wrote in to share how Erlanger Hospital is changing lives through the hiring of Antionette Mattison, the hospital's first full-time SOAR Coordinator!



Erlanger Hospital

"Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga created a full-time SOAR Coordinator position in the fall of 2019, filled by Antionette Mattison. Since that time, Antoinette has obtained 26 approvals for applicants! The fastest approval was achieved within 2 weeks! The successes are incredible; one applicant, who had been experiencing homelessness and had both a mental illness and severe functional mobility, was previously denied Medicaid and disability benefits. Antionette re-filed his claim with a detailed Medical Summary Report, and he was approved! With income and health insurance, he was able to move to a long-term skilled nursing facility. In addition to these individual successes, the hospital has also recouped a significant amount of money for unpaid bills.

The hospital has found that the SOAR model works exceptionally well for patients experiencing homelessness who have long-term healthcare needs. Without resources, it is

hard for these individuals to transition into post-acute services. Once they have income and insurance, they can move to the next level of care.”

Thank you for sharing this incredible SOAR success, Whitney! Interested in learning more about how the SOAR model can work in hospitals? Check out the SOAR issue brief, [Collaborating With Hospitals: A How-To Primer!](#)

Share Your SOAR Success

**Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All client names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

Funding Opportunity!

[Enhancement and Expansion of Treatment and Recovery Services for Adolescents, Transitional-Aged Youth, and their Families](#)

Application deadline: February 8, 2021

SAMHSA, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment is accepting applications for the fiscal year 2021 Enhancement and Expansion of Treatment and Recovery Services for Adolescents, Transitional-Aged Youth, and their Families grant program.

SAMHSA states, “The purpose of this program is to enhance and expand comprehensive treatment, early intervention, and recovery support services for adolescents (ages 12-18) and transitional-aged youth (ages 16-25) with substance use disorders and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders, and their families/primary caregivers.” *Applicants can consider that recovery support services could include SOAR services for transitional-aged youth and their families/primary caregivers experiencing homelessness/at risk of homelessness with disabling health conditions.*

Eligible applicants include state governments, local governments, American Indian/Alaska Native tribes, and various other tribal organizations, public or private universities and colleges, public/private non-profit healthcare systems, and community and faith-based organizations.

Please visit SAMHSA's website for more information about this funding opportunity.

Events



[SSI for Children: Engaging Families for Successful SOAR Applications](#)

February 3, 2021, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET (TOMORROW!)

Join the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center tomorrow, February 3, for the *SSI for Children: Engaging Families for Successful SOAR Applications* webinar! In this webinar, participants will hear from seasoned SOAR providers who have had great success in building relationships with families and other professionals from child-serving systems in their communities. In addition, SOAR providers will learn how to collaborate with medical providers to document a child's disability more effectively.

Register for the Webinar

[SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls](#)

February 16, 2021, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place on February 16, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can join to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar

Get Social With the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Hear more about what SAMHSA SOAR is up to via [@samhsagov](#) on Twitter, [@samhsa](#) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) on LinkedIn!



Federal Updates

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Releases New Find Shelter Tool](#)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has released Find Shelter, a new tool, to the public. The Find Shelter tool provides information about housing, shelter, health care, and clothing resources in communities across the country. To find local resources in your area, visit the tool, click on one of the available categories, enter your location, and click Search to get started.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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SAMHSA 5600 Fishers Ln
Rockville, MD | 20857 US

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